

10/12/77

rec'd 10/14/77

AL171

EXERPTS FROM A LETTER FROM ARGENTINA -- received October 12, 1977

(regarding the Sierra Chica prison)

...I will try to be brief and clear about what's happening. The fundamental theme of the present letter is the seriousness of the prison situation, which has worsened in an accelerated manner in the last few weeks. I emphasize: the main thing to worry about right now is their physical safety.

They have divided up the political prisoners according to what they may be suspected of: those that are considered to be serious political opponents of the regime are subjected to a markedly harsher treatment. For example, some wings (sections of the prison) are allowed four hours of visiting a week, they are allowed to exercise, and in some cases, even to have television. In other wings, where supposed "heavier" political prisoners are held, they don't get the above benefits and in fact get punished more frequently. For punishment they are sent to wing #12 where they become either physically ill or mentally disturbed due to the inhumane conditions. The reason for the punishment is either no reason at all, or sometimes because "he looked the wrong way" or "talked when he wasn't supposed to." They are just excuses, of course.

R. was punished three times in a row: first for 5 days, then for 7 days, and then for 9 days. Consequently we didn't get to see him almost all of August and part of September. That would not be the worst of it; the worst thing is the conditions in the punishment cell. During August, the average temperature here is below zero inside the round cement cell (or hole) where the only light comes from a small window. The prisoner is left inside with just his shoes, light pants, and a shirt: no socks, no underwear, no sweater. At 6 p.m. they are given a mattress and some blankets, which are then taken away at 7 a.m. At that time, they are taken naked to the cold showers.

E. was also punished this way for no reason given, and due to his poor health was found passed out on the floor after the second day. The guards just dragged him to the infirmary.

Aside from this, the most serious developments are around what happened to O. On September 12 he was taken by the military "out somewhere". His mother would go to the visiting line and the guards would tell her that he was not there; no other explanation. We finally found out on the 24th of September that he is back in his cell after having been missing for ten days!!! during which he was "interrogated" (with torture).

But the worst thing of all is not being able to do anything...you can't go to anyone, who can do anything? What the prisoners ask themselves is "who will be next?" At least O. is back and alive, but what about the others, and the ones who will be next. And even if they don't get killed, is it fair that they should be "kidnapped" and tortured?

And those of us on the outside are always waiting for the next visiting session with the anxiety of not finding our loved one because he may be in wing #12, or in the hospital, or missing, or dead. It's horrible to feel this impotence, not to be able to do anything, except, to talk (those of us who still dare to), or, to write.....

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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80 D177  
Box 4855

EDUARDO GONZALEZ, held in Sierra Chica Prison - Arrested in Azul on Nov. 10, 1974  
Was missing from his cell from the 12 of Sept. until the 22 of Sept. He was  
taken out by the military and no one knew of his whereabouts. He is back in Sierra  
Chica now.

Ruben Piazza, held in Sierra Chica Prison - Arrested in Azul on Nov. 10, 1974  
Was punished three times in a row for no reason at all.

Eduardo Grutsky (information same as above)  
Punished for no reason at all.

Prison Director --- Sr. Marquez

Jefe del Penal --- Sr. Uzet